Medical examination of recruits

1677. SHRI R.K. ANAND: Will the Minister of DEFENCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that failure of Regimental Medical Officers (RMOs) to carry out proper medical examination of recruits at the time of their selection resulted in wasteful expenditure on their training till discharge, besides an infructuous expenditure of Rs. 2.63 crores on pay, allowances and ration on recruites before their invalidation; and

(b) if so, what action does Government propose to take to recover the expenditure from RMOs, etc.?

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) There was no failure on the part of Regimental Medical Officers (RMOs) to carry out proper medical examination of recruits resulting in wasteful expenditure on their training and infructuous expenditure.

As per the revised recruitment policy effective from 1st April, 1998, recruitment in the Army is carried out through open rallies, the recruitment process starts with the preliminary screening of the aspiring candidates at the rally site followed by document checking and a physical fitness test. Then medical examination of the aspiring candidates is conducted by Recruiting Medical Officers at the rally site. This is followed by a written examination for the medically fit candidates.

The recruitment medical examination at the rally site is often conducted in sub optimal conditions, such as poor light, noise and insufficient power supply, where a number of disabilities could be missed. Many candidates, on the advice of private practitioners, are also known to take drugs which may mask symptoms of a disability Some defects may have been in the nascent stage, which may have progressed in the 2-3 months intervening period between initial medical examination and second medical examination.

Each case of non-detection of a disease at the Recruiting Medical Examination is enquired into and suitable administrative/disciplinary action taken.

The newly posted Recruiting Medical Officers are being provided special training in Military Hospitals for conducting medical examination at recruitment rallies.